

Members

Rep. Tim Wesco, Chairperson
Rep. Vanessa Summers
Sen. Travis Holdman
Sen. Earline Rogers
Cinda Kelley
Tracie Wells
Melanie Brizzi
Mark Everson
Daniel Hasler
Jim Greeson
Tony Bennett
Gregory Larkin
David McKee



COMMITTEE ON CHILD CARE

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 27, 2011
Meeting Time: 1:15 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Tim Wesco, Chairperson; Rep. Vanessa Summers; Sen. Travis Holdman; Cinda Kelley; Tracie Wells; Melanie Brizzi; Brenda Summers for Mark Everson; Jeff Short for Jim Greeson; David McKee.

Members Absent: Sen. Earline Rogers; Daniel Hasler; Tony Bennett; Gregory Larkin.

Rep. Wesco called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. He informed those present that the members had visited 4 child care facilities prior to the meeting and the meeting would be used exclusively for member discussion of those visits.

Rep. Wesco described the four child care facilities visited by the members:

- (1) St. Mary's Child Care Center, which cares for 214 children who are aged 3 to 5 years and come from families in poverty. St. Mary's has a \$1.6 million budget, \$600,000 of which is provided by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) vouchers (less than 5% of the budget), United Way of Central Indiana, and certain contracts. \$1 million of the budget is provided through private donations. St Mary's focuses on high risk children.
- (2) Charity Child Care Ministry, which cares for 210 children, 140 of whose cost of child

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care is paid through CCDF. Charity's budget concerns are shared with the adjoining, affiliated church, which started Charity Child Care Ministry. Rep. Wesco discussed his conversation with Mr. Short concerning the "primary use of the building" legal requirement for fire safety.

(3) Tumika Gilbert's child care home, which is licensed as a child care home and which is used solely for child care. The building is not used as a home in which people live.

(4) Little Miracles Daycare, a religiously affiliated child care facility that is located in a home.

Sen. Holdman stated that he was impressed with the religious child care settings of St. Mary's Child Care Center and Charity Child Care Ministry. He described each as ministries, rather than commercial enterprises. He noted that the church and ministries work together to meet the needs of each, and that each is answering a calling.

Sen. Holdman stated that he was alarmed upon visiting the Little Miracles child care facility, which he described as a commercial enterprise, rather than a ministry. Sen. Holdman stated that:

- (a) there were mouse droppings on the dirty floor in the kitchen;
- (b) twenty-eight children were being watched by 1 person;
- (c) food was left warming on the stove after lunch had been served (which the Family and Social Services agency inspector required the facility personnel to discard);
- (d) if necessary, he would resign from the Senate and babysit for his fifteen month old grandson rather than allow his grandson to be cared for in such deplorable conditions;
- (e) the curriculum for the children at Little Miracles was obtained from the Internet; and
- (f) Little Miracles has received \$10,000,000 in taxpayer funds for child care during the past 5 years.

Sen. Holdman expressed his concern that a place that uses the term "ministry" in its description is actually putting children at risk, and that parents who often do not have good choices of child care facilities may rely on that description.

Sen. Holdman compared Little Miracles to St. Mary's, which receives less than 5% of its budget from taxpayer funds.

Rep. Wesco stated that he questioned the director of Little Miracles and learned that Little Miracles is not affiliated with a church or other religious organization in any way. He stated that the legal requirement for a child care facility to be classified as a "ministry" does not require actual affiliation with a religious organization, but instead requires an Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) designation.

Ms. Kelley noted the diversity of the child care facilities that were observed by the members during the visits. She expressed her opinion that child care facilities are "change agents" for children, parents, and families. She questioned the use of taxpayer funding in such a place as Little Miracles.

Ms. Wells stated that she missed the visits due to child care issues with her own sick child. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity and discussion among the members, helping to educate people and determine the appropriate course of legislative action.

Rep. Wesco stated that any requests for proposed legislation, or findings and recommendations for the Committee's final report, must be submitted to Ms. Naughton before Tuesday, October 11, 2011, to allow time for completion before the final meeting of the

Committee on Tuesday, October 25, 2011.

With no further business to discuss, Rep. Wesco adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.